

Game Night That Doesn't Suck — Planner + Strategy Checklist (Printable)

Host name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____ Theme/Vibe (circle): Chill / Chaotic / Fandom / Couples / Faith-friendly

Guest count: _____ Group energy (circle): Quiet / Medium / Loud

1) The “No-Stress” Plan (5 minutes, max)

Your one-sentence goal for tonight:

Big laughs Cozy hang Flirty date vibe Deep connection Fandom chaos Clean fun

Translation: “Tonight is about _____.”

Your win condition (pick one):

- Everyone laughs at least once
 - Nobody asks “wait, what are we doing?” after round 2
 - We end while it’s still fun (not when we’re dead)
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2) Build Your Game Lineup (this is the secret sauce)

Rule: Don’t buy one game. Buy a lineup.

You want: **Opener (quick)** + **Main Event (big)** + **Closer (short)** + **Backup (save the vibe)**.

OPENER (5–10 min): warms people up fast

Party deck Fandom deck Couples deck Faith-friendly deck

Game name: _____ **Link:** _____

MAIN EVENT (30–60 min): your headline game

Party deck Fandom deck Couples deck Faith-friendly deck

Game name: _____ **Link:** _____

CLOSER (10–15 min): “one last round” energy

Party deck Fandom deck Couples deck Faith-friendly deck

Game name: _____ **Link:** _____

BACKUP (when the room gets weird): the vibe reset button

Louder option Cleaner option More personal option Different fandom option

Game name: _____ **Link:** _____

Easy cart goal:

- 2 games (main + backup)
 - 3 games (opener + main + backup)
 - 4 games (full lineup: opener + main + closer + backup)
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3) Know Your Crowd (so the game doesn't flop)

Circle what your group is like:

Inside-joke heavy / New people / Mixed ages / Easily embarrassed / Competitive / Just here to vibe

Safety setting (pick one):

- "Anything goes"
- "Keep it PG-13-ish"
- "If it's awkward, we toss it—no debate"

If there are new people:

- Start with the easiest game first
 - Do a "practice round" that doesn't count
 - Rotate the reader fast so nobody dominates
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4) Set the Vibe (the table should do the hosting)

Lights (check one): Bright enough to read Cozy but readable Not interrogation-room bright

Music: Playlist ready Volume low enough to talk No constant skipping

Table: Cards in the center Trash bowl nearby Napkins on deck

The 3-second setup that makes people play:

- Put the game on the table before anyone arrives
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5) Snacks + Drinks (fun fuel, not messy chaos)

Snack vibe (circle): Sweet / Salty / Both / "Whatever's easiest"

Pick 2–3 "clean-hand" snacks:

- Pretzels Popcorn Candy Cookies Fruit Nuts Chips + bowls Other:
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Pick 1 “hero snack” (the one people remember):

Drinks:

Water available Something fun (soda/mocktail/tea) Cups/ice ready

Messy food rule:

Messy food stays off the game table

6) Quick Host Checklist (check as you go)

Before people arrive

- Main game chosen
 - Backup game ready
 - Opener/closer picked (optional but elite)
 - Table + seating set
 - Lights readable
 - Playlist on low
 - Snacks + napkins out
 - Drinks + water ready
 - Trash bowl/bin near table
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“Buy a Lineup” Mini Guide (so they grab multiple games)

If you want a guaranteed good night, build your cart like this:

1 Quick Opener (warm-up laughs)

1 Main Event (the big hitter)

1 Backup (different vibe, saves the night)

Optional: 1 Closer (short, addictive “one more round” energy)

My cart plan (circle): 2 games / 3 games / 4 games

Games I’m buying today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Final note: If you can't decide, choose **one chaotic option + one connection option**. That combo covers basically every group.